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OUTER LOOP
IN DENTON COUNTY

WELCOME

The Regional Outer Loop in Denton County

Public Kickoff Meeting Presentation

In-Person: May 18 and 22, 2023

Virtual: www.DentonCountyOuterLoop.com

Hello and welcome to the Regional Outer Loop in Denton County public meeting. We appreciate your interest in this project and thank you for your participation.



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MEETING PURPOSE

- **Inform** the public about the study process and status
- **Share** information about the conceptual alignments being studied
- **Invite** the public to provide input
- **Receive and consider** comments

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This public meeting has been convened by Denton County and the Texas Department of Transportation, also known as TxDOT, to provide information about the Denton County Outer Loop study, which is just beginning.

The meeting is intended to:

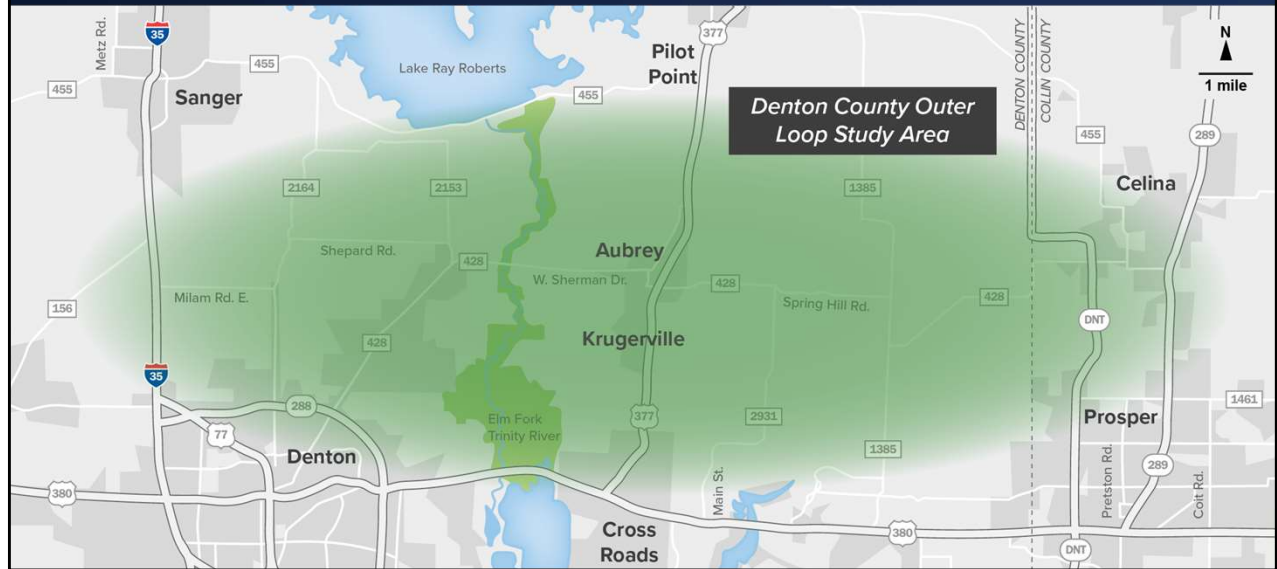
- Inform the public about the study process and status
- Share information about all the conceptual alignments being studied
- Invite the public to provide their input to inform future phases of the project

This public meeting is being held in compliance with both federal and state guidance. Official meeting documentation will be made available after the meeting comment period.



PROJECT OVERVIEW

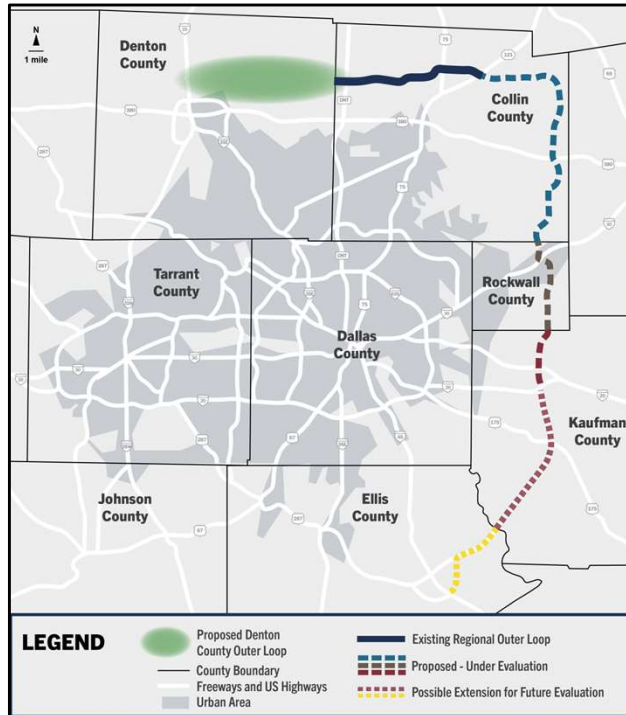
Schematic Design & Environmental Study



To address increasing growth in the region, Denton County and TxDOT have partnered to study a section of the Regional Outer Loop across Denton County. As a new location freeway, this section of the Regional Outer Loop would extend approximately 23 miles from I-35 on the west to the Dallas North Tollway on the east.

The study is expected to take three to four years to complete. This initial part of the study will focus on identifying potential routes for the Outer Loop across Denton County. During the second part of the study, a more rigorous evaluation of the potential impacts of a selected number of routes will be completed with the development of an Environmental Impact Statement or EIS.

Transportation projects can require years of advanced planning and development, which is why the county must plan now for the growth it expects in the future.



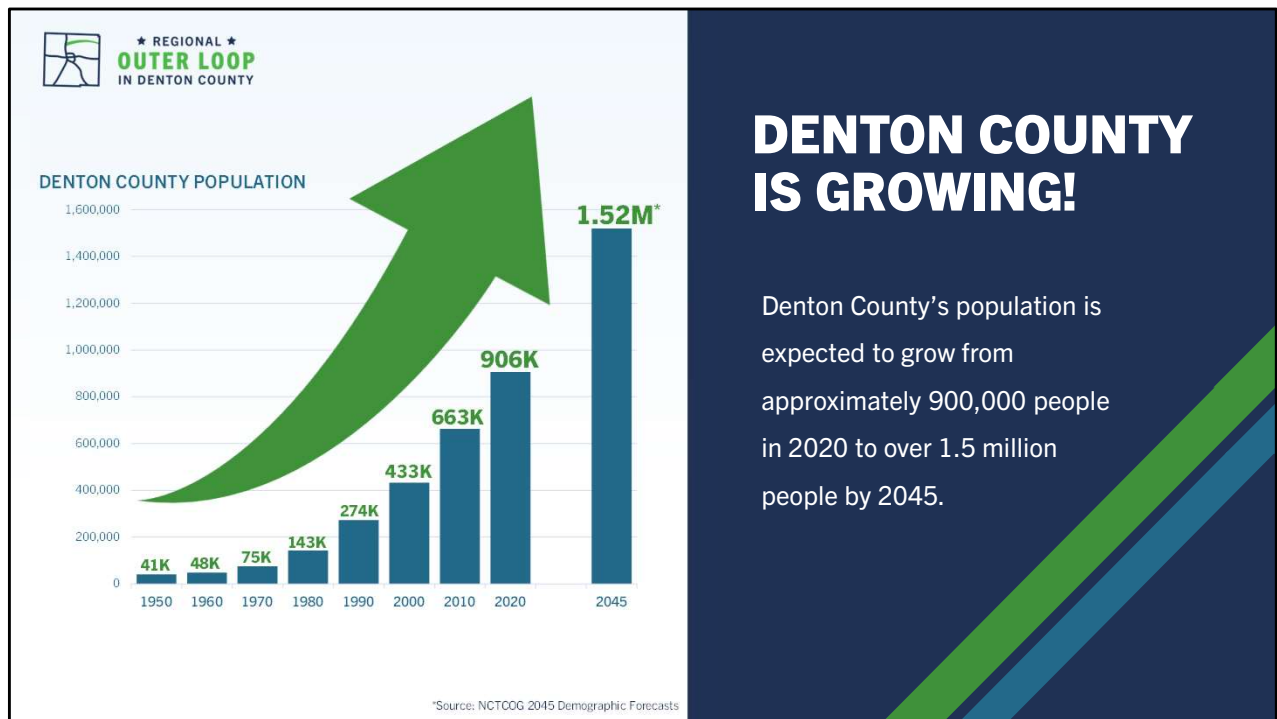
THE REGIONAL OUTER LOOP VISION

The Regional Outer Loop is being planned to extend from Denton County, across Collin County, and then south through Rockwall, Kaufman, and possibly Ellis Counties.

Project Contacts:

- *Denton County Outer Loop* – Tony Kimmey, info@dentoncountyouterloop.com
- *Collin County Outer Loop* – Clarence Daugherty, cdaugherty@co.collin.tx.us
- *Rockwall County Outer Loop* – Matt Craig, RCOL@half.com
- *Kaufman County Outer Loop* – Brian Swindell, connect@kaufmanouterloop.com

While the Denton County Outer Loop is an independent project, it is also part of a larger system of proposed freeways that will link together to form the Regional Outer Loop, extending from Denton County, across Collin County, and then south through Rockwall, Kaufman, and possibly Ellis Counties.



The Denton County Outer Loop is being studied because anticipated population growth in the county will require better roads with greater connectivity.

Substantial growth is projected across Denton County and especially within the study area. With a population of 900,000 in 2020, Denton County is projected to grow to 1.52 million people by 2045 according to the North Central Texas Council of Governments' demographic forecasts for the region.

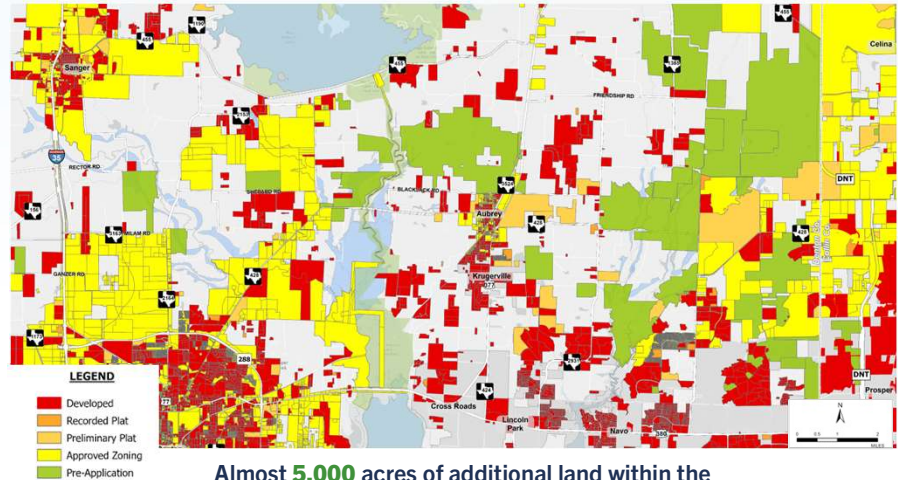
As growth and development continue to push north and east, transportation improvements will be needed to accommodate the increasing population.



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LAND IS BEING DEVELOPED QUICKLY

Between 2015 & 2021,
more than 20,000*
acres of farm, ranch,
timber, and vacant land
have been converted to
single family or
commercial use in
Denton County.



*Source: US 380 Denton County Feasibility Study (2020)

Almost 5,000 acres of additional land within the
study area are planned for development.

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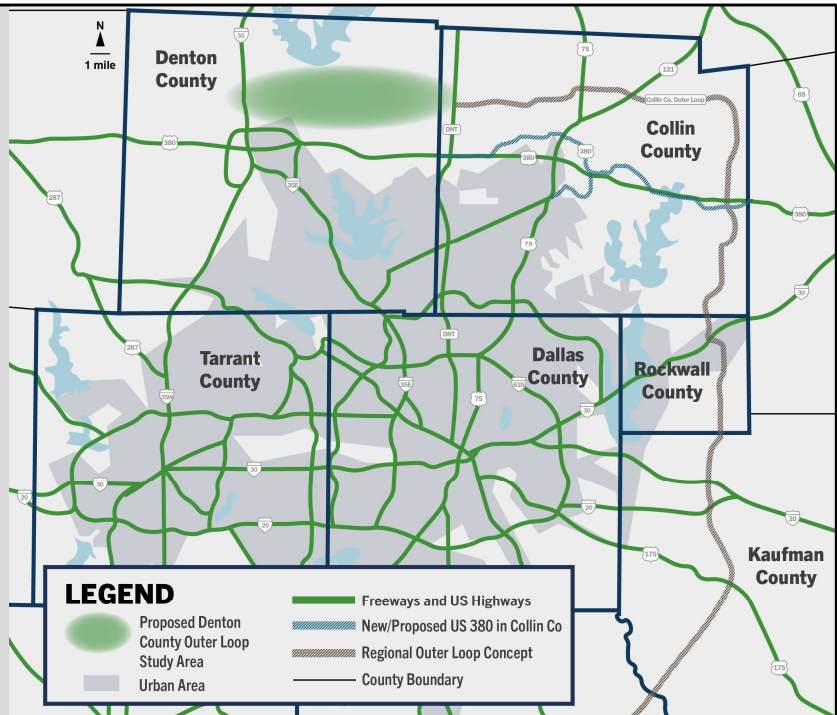
Land across Denton County is being developed at a rapid pace. While this isn't something the County can control, we can plan for it. Previous studies have determined that between 2015 and 2021, more than 20,000 acres of farm, ranch, timber and vacant land have been converted to single family or commercial use. That's more than the entire area of local cities like Richardson, Prosper, and Celina, and roughly equivalent to a third of the area of the City of Denton in just five years!

Approximately **5,000** acres of additional land within the study area is planned for development.

Given the rapid growth and development that is expected, the County must act now to establish the alignment of the Denton County Outer Loop, obtain environmental clearance, and then preserve the land needed for the corridor to protect it from future development.

THE EXISTING ROADWAY NETWORK IS LIMITED

Denton County population in 2045 will be similar to Tarrant County's population in 2010, with fewer controlled access highways in the existing and planned network to support increased traffic demand.

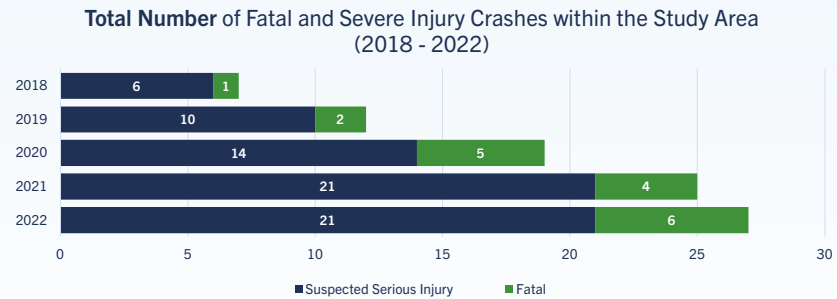


This project also seeks to enhance regional mobility and connectivity.

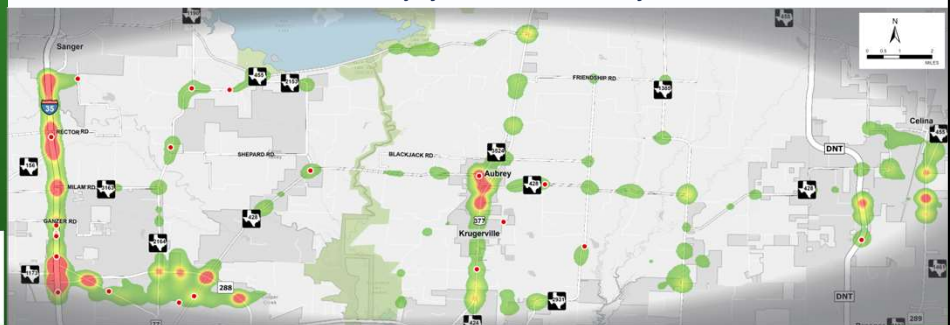
It is estimated that Denton County's population in 2045 will be similar to what Tarrant County and Fort Worth's population was in 2010. However, Denton County has far fewer controlled access highways in the existing and planned network to support that increased traffic demand.

The existing roadway network across the study area consists of small rural county roads and Farm-to-Market highways. These roadways were not designed to handle the expected growth in traffic and travel demand driven by population growth. Additionally, the only existing east-west multilane highway across Denton County is US 380, which is already congested and getting worse. While improvements to US 380 and other roadways are being studied and planned throughout the county, analyses show that another major east-west travel corridor will be needed as growth and development continue to push north and east.

THE FUTURE ROADWAY NETWORK SHOULD BE SAFE



Location of Fatal and Severe Injury Crashes within Study Area (2018 – 2022)



Finally, as traffic volumes grow, the existing and proposed roadway network will experience additional congestion, contributing to an increase in the number and severity of crashes. The map above illustrates hot spot areas where crashes have occurred across the study area over the last five years. Between 2018 and 2022, fatal and severe injury crashes have increased across the study area by 285%. This study will evaluate how development of the Denton County Outer Loop would address the safety of the existing road network.



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Previous studies have found that an east-west route in Denton County is feasible and warranted based on expected growth.



2007 - 2011

A **Feasibility Study for a Regional Outer Loop** around the DFW metroplex was conducted. It found that an east-west route in Denton County may be warranted based on expected growth.



2016 & 2021

NCTCOG recommended the **Denton County Outer Loop** as an eventual six-lane freeway in Mobility 2040 and again in Mobility 2045, the region's long-range transportation plan.



2019

The **Denton Greenbelt Corridor Feasibility Study** identified the viability of the Outer Loop across northeast Denton County. It determined the Outer Loop is warranted.



2013

The Outer Loop was added to the **Denton County 2013 Thoroughfare Plan** update, which identifies long-range county transportation vision and direction.



2017

The **Denton County 2017 Thoroughfare Plan** included additional analysis that validated the need for US 380 and the Outer Loop as higher-capacity east-west connectors.

This study of the Denton County Outer Loop is building on several previous studies that identified the need and feasibility of a new east-west freeway across Denton County. These previous studies were conducted by the North Central Texas Council of Governments and Denton County over the last fifteen years. These studies, as well as the current Denton County Thoroughfare plan, identified potential routes for the Denton County Outer Loop. This current study will build on those findings to further develop and refine alignments, evaluate their potential impact, and ultimately identify a preferred alternative.

TASKS FOR THIS STUDY



► Develop the Schematic Design of Potential Alignments

Develop and analyze roadway alignments including those previously studied.



► Conduct Environmental Studies

Field Studies and Development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) document.

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This study will develop the schematic design of potential alignments and conduct studies to assess their impact on the human and natural environment.

The Schematic Design will determine factors such as the number of lanes needed, ramp locations, interchange configurations, drainage mitigation, and the amount of land (also called right-of-way) needed to construct the project. It will also consider bicycle, pedestrian and other recreational accommodations and calculate detailed cost estimates for each potential alignment.

The Environmental desktop analysis and field surveys will be conducted to identify important features and possible constraints. The findings of these studies and the assessment of potential impacts will be disclosed in the EIS developed for the Denton County Outer Loop. The EIS will be developed in accordance with federal regulations and TxDOT requirements.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)

► NEPA requires federal agencies to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions prior to making decisions.

► An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is prepared when it is anticipated a proposed project could significantly affect the quality of the human and natural environment.

► Adhering to NEPA is required on any project that would receive any federal funding.

TXDOT's NEPA Assignment

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being, or have been, carried out by TxDOT pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated Dec. 9, 2019, and executed by the Federal Highway Administration and TxDOT.

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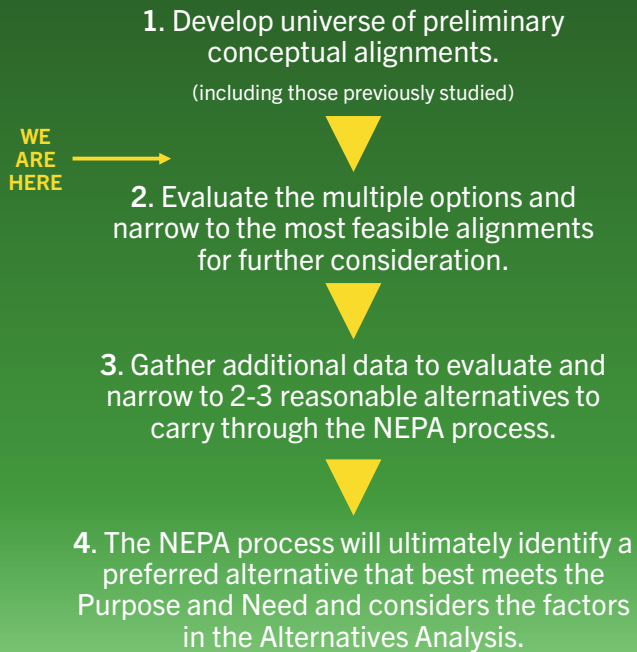
This project is subject to review under the National Environmental Policy Act, also known as NEPA. NEPA is a federal law that outlines the process federal agencies must follow to determine the impacts of their actions on the human and natural environment prior to making decisions and must include opportunities for the public to review and comment on those evaluations.

The County must obtain environmental clearance for the project from TxDOT in order to use federal funds to construct the proposed roadway.



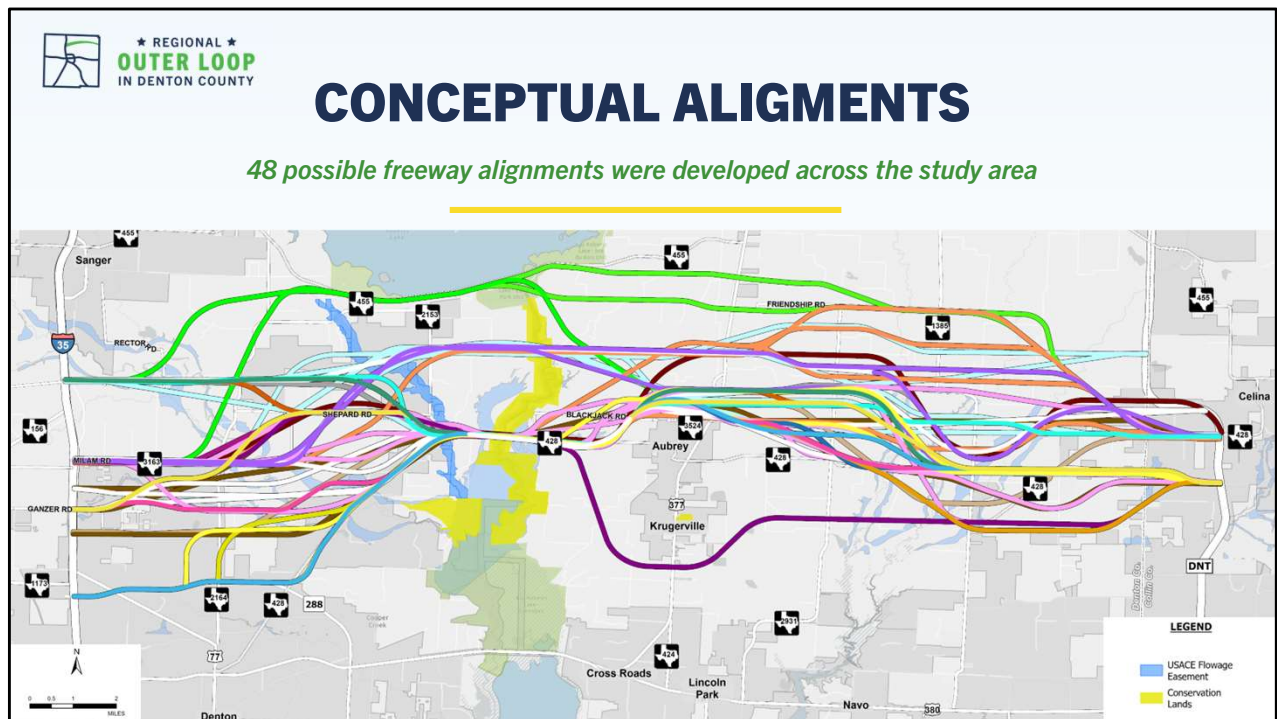
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DETERMINING THE ALIGNMENTS



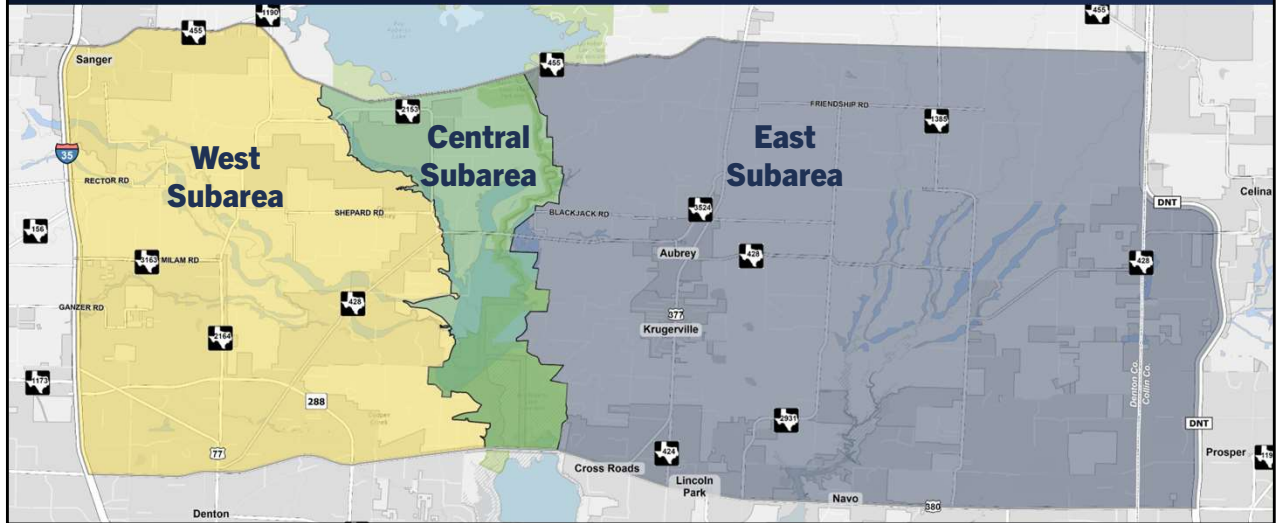
As the study progresses over the next few years, various alignment options will be developed and evaluated to ultimately identify one preferred alternative.

First, the study team has developed a large number of conceptual alignments in a variety of locations across the study area. The study team is refining those alignments and screening them to identify the most feasible alignments to move forward for more detailed study. Once the reasonable alignments are identified, the study team will gather even more in-depth data and conduct field surveys to further evaluate the impact of those alternatives and the No-Build Alternative during the NEPA process. Ultimately, the EIS developed for the Denton County Outer Loop will identify a preferred alternative that best meets the transportation needs identified within the study area and that minimizes impacts to communities and the natural environment.



The study team is considering alignments developed during previous studies, new alignments, and projects included in approved Thoroughfare Plans. The study team is establishing design criteria and engineering feasibility, conducting traffic analyses, and identifying key community and environmental resources. 48 possible alignments were developed across the study area.

WEST, CENTRAL & EAST STUDY SUBAREAS



To further analyze the conceptual alignments, the study team divided the study area into West, Central and East Subareas. The study subareas represent areas with similar features and potential issues.



SCREENING CRITERIA CONSIDERED

Many factors are considered to determine the viability of an alignment. As part of the early evaluation process, data was collected in each of these areas to assess the potential impact of each alignment.



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS



Wetlands and Streams



Oil & Gas Well Properties



Floodplains



MOBILITY IMPACTS



System Connectivity



Traffic Level of Service



FEDERAL PROPERTY AND MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPACTS



Airstrips



Major Utilities

- Longitudinal (parallel)
- Transverse (crosses)



US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
Flowage Easements**



Conservation Lands



COMMUNITY IMPACTS



Residential Property*



Potential Residential Displacements



Potential Business Displacements



Community Facilities
(religious property, cemeteries,
schools, universities, etc.)



Parkland (existing)



Future Open Space (planned
parks, recreation and open space
areas)



Community input will be an important part of the evaluation process as the study progresses.

* In addition to residences and businesses, displacements such as garages, sheds, barns and billboards will also be considered as the study moves forward.

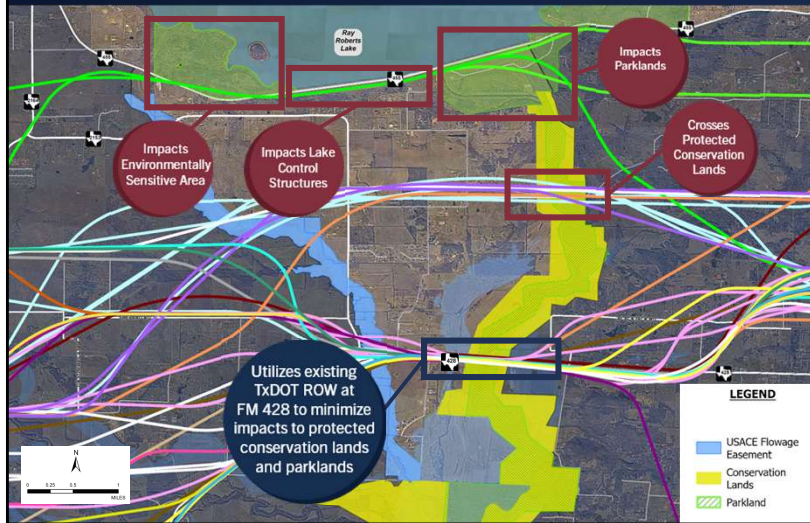
** Flowage Easements are non-federal land on which the United States Government has acquired certain perpetual rights, including the rights to overflow, flood, and submerge the land, prohibit structures for human habitation, and approve all other structures proposed for construction within the flowage easement.

Many factors are being considered to determine the viability of alignments at this initial stage including potential impacts to communities, the environment, mobility, existing and future development, federal lands and major infrastructure. Data has been collected in these categories to initially screen the conceptual alignments.

The study area includes many constraints from residences and ranches to public lands and rivers. Our study team is working to avoid and minimize, as feasible, impacts to homes, businesses, and environmentally sensitive areas.

CENTRAL SUBAREA IN FOCUS

High-Risk Constraints



Several high-risk constraints were identified in the Central Subarea early in the evaluation process. The study team is recommending that the northern alignments within the Central Subarea be removed from further consideration.

- ▶ Alignments along FM 455 would significantly impact Ray Roberts Lake Dam Control Structures, Parklands, and Environmentally Sensitive Areas.
- ▶ Alignments midway between FM 428 and FM 455 would impact federally protected lands. Acquiring federal land designated for conservation requires many layers of federal approval, possibly delaying the project and leading to blockage of desired alignments by ongoing development.

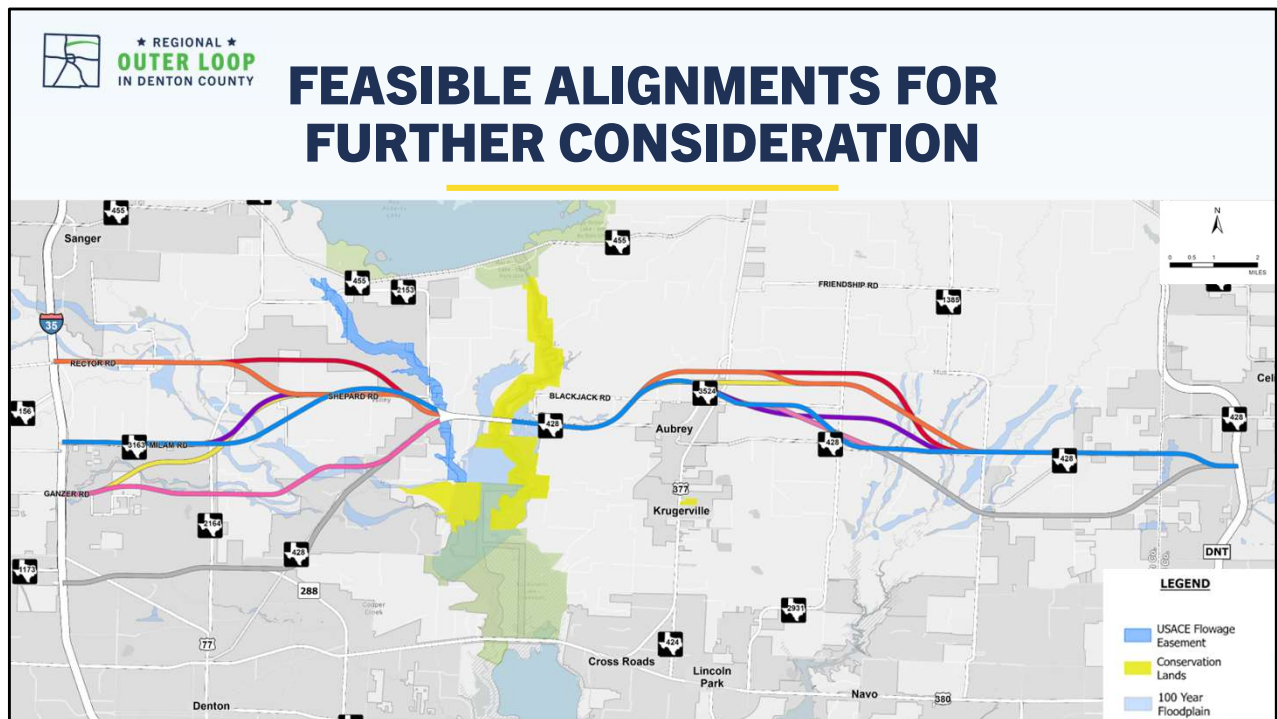
Although all 48 alignments were absent of any known fatal flaws and considered feasible based on displacements and environmental impacts, several scored lower when considering mobility, federal land, major infrastructure, and community impacts and constraints.

Early on, the team identified several high-risk constraints in the Central Subarea. These include potential impacts to federally owned and environmentally sensitive land, lake control structures at the Ray Roberts Lake dam, the Ray Roberts Lake Isle du Bois State Park, the Ray Roberts Lake Culp Branch Recreation Area, and the Ray Roberts Lake State Park Greenbelt.

The Greenbelt Corridor represents a major constraint in the study area. Almost all the land along the Greenbelt is either owned by the US Army Corps of Engineers or in private or state ownership but under a protective conservation easement. To acquire land protected by a conservation easement requires many layers of federal approval. These additional approvals could delay the project and lead to blockage of desired alignments by ongoing development activities.

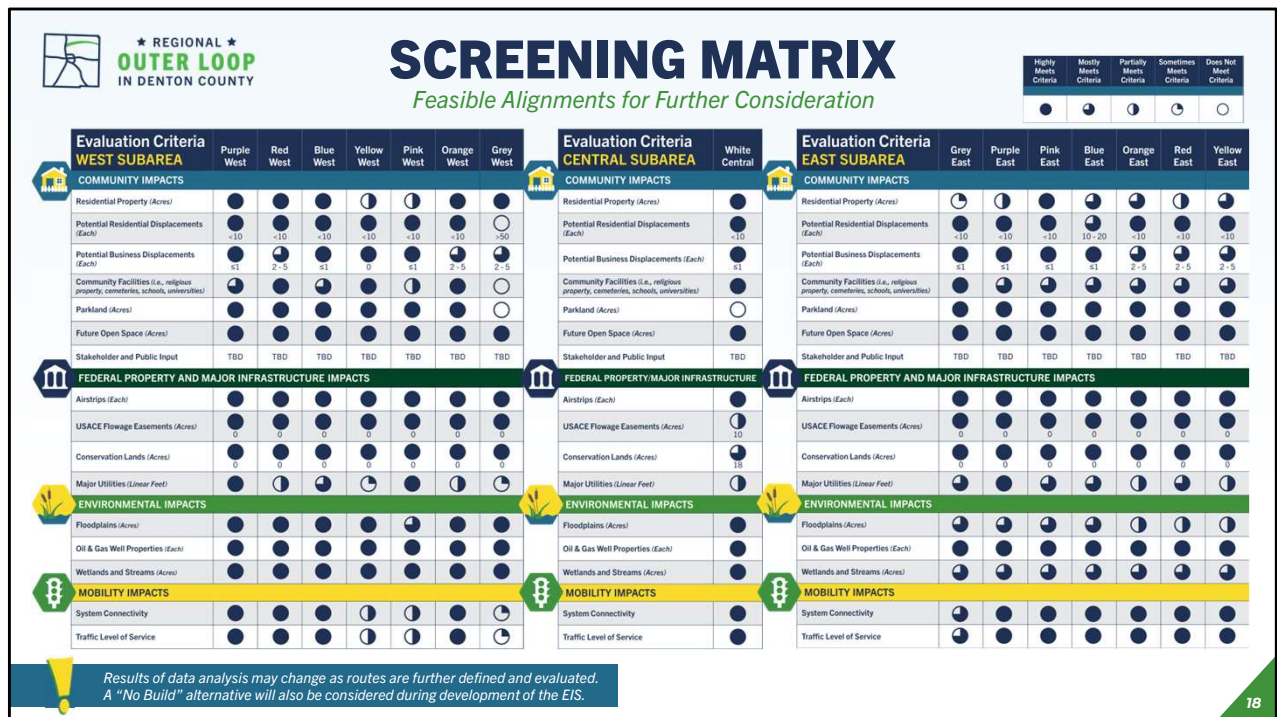
The existing FM 428 corridor has been identified as the most feasible location to cross the Greenbelt because it would utilize existing TxDOT right-of-way and would minimize impacts

to federally protected conservation and park lands. Alignments that utilize this corridor were considered least impactful and should lower project delay risks.



The remaining initial alignments that utilize the FM 428 crossing were then evaluated based on their ability to meet future needs of the County and minimize impacts. The study team recommends advancing the alignments displayed on this map.

The alignments shown here are preliminary and subject to change. The County is requesting your input to further identify features and issues that should be considered as the study progresses. The County will consider all comments received in order to revise or remove alignments during the next steps in the study process. This is why public input and feedback is critical during this initial part of the project development process.

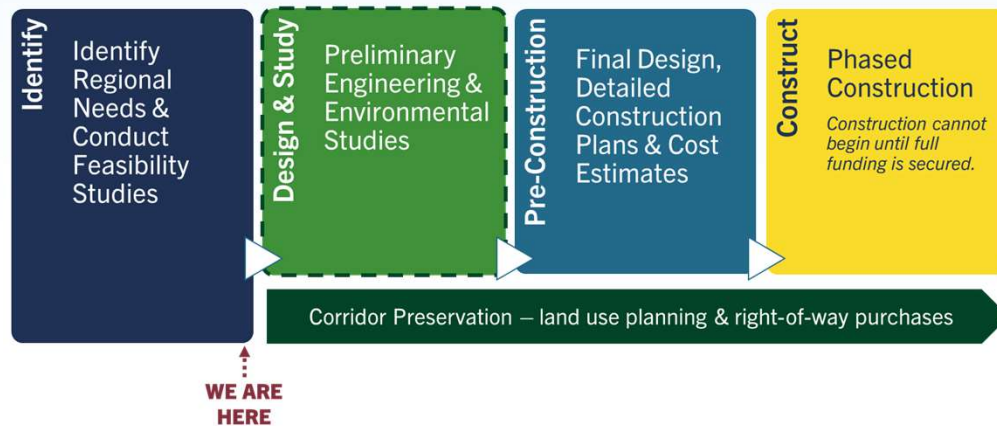


Several criteria were used to screen the initial alignments. This table summarizes the results of the initial screening for the highest scoring alignments. Seven potential alignments are being recommended for further study in the West Subarea, one potential alignment (along FM 428) is being recommended for the Central Subarea, and seven potential alignments are being recommended for the East Subarea.



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PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



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Making the Denton County Outer Loop a reality will take time.

This diagram outlines the typical project development process for this kind of roadway project. The County is currently at the “Design & Study” phase, conducting preliminary engineering and environmental studies, which are expected to take three to four years to complete. Following the completion of this environmental study and schematic design and upon receiving NEPA clearance from TxDOT, the project would move into final design, the development of detailed construction plans and cost estimates, and the acquisition of right-of-way. Utility coordination will occur throughout the schematic and final design, with utility relocations, where needed, occurring prior to the start of roadway construction. Final design and right-of-way acquisition could take several more years before construction could begin.

Right of way for this project would be acquired in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisitions Policies Act of 1970, as amended. The State of Texas provides information on Landowner rights, which is included on the open house web page.

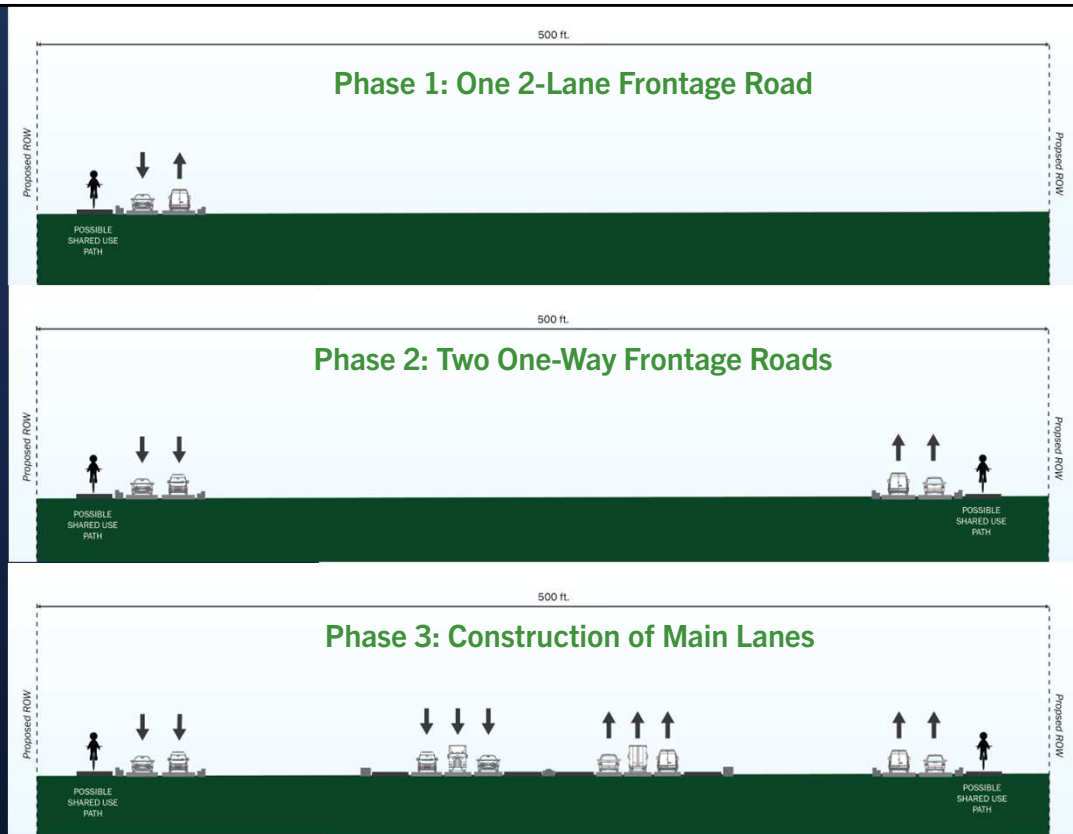


PHASED CONSTRUCTION

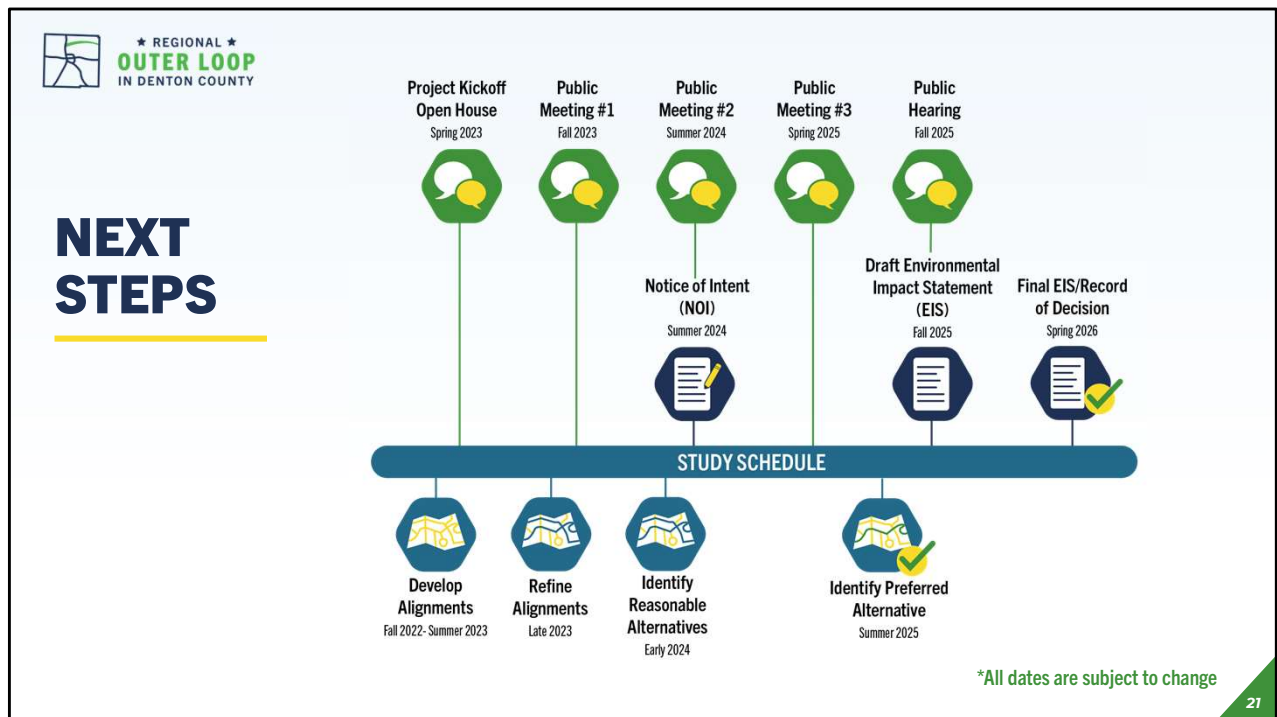
Freeway Typical Section

Phased construction means construction of the roadway could be phased over time. Frontage roads may be built first, and then the main lanes of a freeway as demand increases.

These diagrams are for illustration purposes only and do not represent the final design or lane configuration for the roadway. Modifications to the lane configuration and ROW width will occur as the study progresses.



The Denton County Outer Loop would be built in phases over a number of years. Phased construction would involve building different sections of frontage roads first followed by the construction of the freeway lanes within the center of the corridor over time as growth and travel demand warrants. Construction cannot begin until full funding for the project is identified.



Several public meetings are being planned to engage the public and interested parties. These meetings and online virtual content will allow the public the opportunity to view study progress and provide input during all phases of the study.

Next steps for study are shown on the screen. The study team will continue to develop and refine the alignments throughout the rest of 2023. The next public meeting is anticipated to be held in the Fall of 2023, to present the results of the study process to that point and the top reasonable alternatives recommended for further detailed study.

By mid-2024, a minimum of two end-to-end Build Alternatives and the No Build Alternative will be presented during public and agency scoping meetings, and a Notice of Intent will be filed to formally start the NEPA process.

Another public meeting will be held in the Spring of 2025 to present the findings of the detailed evaluation of the alternatives under consideration in the developing Environmental Impact Statement.

The project team anticipates recommending a preferred alternative and completing a 95% schematic design by the Summer or Fall of 2025. A public hearing will be held in late 2025 to present and gather input on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the

schematic design of the Preferred Alternative.

Lastly, the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision will be developed in early 2026 for review and approval by TxDOT.

Please note the schedule is subject to change.

HOW TO PROVIDE INPUT

All comments must be received by the study team or postmarked no later than **June 22, 2023** to be part of the official meeting record. Comments may be provided in-person at the Public Open Houses or by one of the following methods:



Website

www.DentonCountyOuterLoop.com



Email

Info@DentonCountyOuterLoop.com



Mail

Burns & McDonnell
Attn: Denton County Outer Loop
13737 Noel Rd., Suite 700
Dallas, TX 75240

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Public input is critical to this project, and we appreciate your feedback! Denton County and TxDOT are available to answer questions throughout the project development process and comments are welcomed.

Comments may be submitted in a number of ways – via the project website, by email, or US Mail at the addresses shown on the screen. As part of this initial study phase, all comments must be submitted on or before Thursday, June 22, 2023 to be included in the official record for this meeting.



Visit the project website at www.dentoncountyouterloop.com for more information and to sign up to receive project updates.

Thank you for your interest in this project and Open House. Your participation is appreciated!